

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, GW

SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S "DETENTE"

COMMENT

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT FORD'S MARCH 1 COMMENT ABOUT
USE OF THE WORD "DETENTE" ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE MEDIA
ATTENTION IN THE FRG, WITH FRONT PAGE HEADLINE ARTICLES
IN MOST MAJOR NEWSPAPERS. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN
BOELLING PRESENTED A GOVERNMENT DEFINITION THAT COMPLE-
MENTED THAT OF THE PRESIDENT. POLITICAL LEADERS BRANDT
(SPD) AND MARX (CDU) ON THE OTHER HAND USED THE OCCASION
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TO DEFEND OPPOSING POLITICAL STRATEGIES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE "SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" HEADLINED "FORD REJECTS THE CONCEPT DETENTE AND SPEAKS OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH." A SHORT ARTICLE SUGGESTED THAT THIS STATEMENT WAS DUE TO REAGAN PRESSURE IN THE PRIMARY CAMPAIGN AS WELL AS INDICATION IN "AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY" THAT SEVERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE THREATENED TO RESIGN IF THE U.S. DOES NOT PRESENT A STRONG FRONT IN THE SALT TALKS. THE ARTICLE NOTED HOWEVER THAT THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED TO SUPPORT SECRETARY KISSINGER AS HIS SECRETARY OF STATE. THE "SZ" FOLLOWED THIS STORY WITH AN ARTICLE REPORTING THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT QUESTIONS WHETHER PARTY SECRETARY BREZHNEV WILL BE ABLE TO COME TO BONN DURING THE 1976 ELECTION YEAR AFTER ALL, BECAUSE OF SCHEDULING PROBLEMS.

2. "DIE WELT" CARRIED THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON ITS FRONT PAGE WITH A HEADLINE DECLARING THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION NO LONGER TO USE THE TERM "DETENTE" INDICATES A NEW ACCENT IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. THERE WERE ALSO SEPARATE ARTICLES ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE TERM DETENTE, AND BONN'S OFFICIAL REACTION. A FOURTH ARTICLE HEADLINED "CHANCELLOR PRAISES THE POLICY OF DETENTE" ATTEMPTS TO CONTRAST SCHMIDT'S VIEWS AS PRESENTED IN A MARCH 2 "DEUTSCHE WELLE" RADIO INTERVIEW, WITH THOSE OF PRESIDENT FORD. IN FACT, HOWEVER, SCHMIDT SEEMED TO BE REFERRING MORE TO THE FRG-POLISH AGREEMENT, WHEN HE ENDORSED DETENTE AS A MEANS OF "DIFFUSING TENSIONS THROUGH TREATIES." HE ADDED:

"YOU CANNOT DEMAND OF THE TREATIES SERVING DETENTE WHAT THEY NEVER HAD IN THE WAY OF AN OBJECTIVE. THE DECLARATION OF HELSINKI AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, FOR INSTANCE, DID NOT INCLUDE ANGOLA. THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LIMITATION OF ARMS IN THE FIELD OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS, THE LIMITATIONS UPON WHICH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE AGREED, NATURALLY DID NOT REFER TO ANGOLA. THE GERMAN-SOVIET TREATY, THE GERMAN-POLISH AGREEMENTS, THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT ON BERLIN, ALL THESE DID NOT TALK ABOUT ANGOLA.

"BY ITS ESSENCE DETENTE STANDS FOR DEFUSING HOTBEDS OF CONFLICT, IF POSSIBLE. WHEREVER TREATIES HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE INDEED TO RELAX CONDITIONS WHICH HAD BEEN TENSE BEFORE. JUST THINK OF BERLIN WHERE A DECADE AND A HALF AGO TANKS FACED EACH

OTHER ACROSS CHECKPOINT CHARLEY WITH GUNS AIMED. THIS
IS PAST HISTORY. OR THINK OF THE ARMS RACE WHICH HAD
FLARED UP IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR-STRATEGIC WEAPONS
IN THE SIXTIES, THREATENING THE LIFE OF THE WORLD AT
LARGE.

"DETENTE POLICY REQUIRES SEVERAL PRECONDITIONS.
ONE PRECONDITION IS THAT THE TWO LEADERSHIP POWERS IN
WEST AND EAST, MEANING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND
THE SOVIET UNION, CONTINUE WANTING IT, THAT IS TO SAY,

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THAT BOTH REGARD IT AS BEING IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS.
THE SECOND PREREQUISITE FOR DETENTE POLICY IS A BALANCE
OF FORCES WHICH MUST NOT BE DISTURBED. . .

3. THE "STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG", BONN "GENERAL-ANZEIGER",
AND "FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU" ALSO HAD HEADLINE FRONT
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PAGE STORIES CONCERNING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT. THE
"GENERAL ANZEIGER" MAINTAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS
NOT ANNOUNCING ANY NEW COURSE, BUT "IS FINDING THAT THE
US-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IS TOO COMPLEX TO BE DESCRIBED
BY ONLY ONE WORD." THE "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG"
ON THE OTHER HAND LIMITED COVERAGE TO AN INSIDE PAGE.

4. ON MARCH 2 GOVERNMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN KLAUS BOELLING
REPLIED TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT:

"THE WORD DETENTE IS AND WAS FROM THE BEGINNING
AMBIGUOUS. HERE AND THERE IT HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD TO
BE THE ABSENCE OR COMPLETE OVERCOMING OF TENSION. THE
CONCEPT EAST-WEST DETENTE HAS NEVER BEEN DEFINED IN A
BINDING MANNER.

"WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPEAKS OF DETENTE, IT
NATURALLY ASSUMES THAT DETENTE POLICIES TO BE BASED ON
REALITY MUST PRESUPPOSE A BALANCE OF FORCES. IT USES
THE TERM WITHOUT ILLUSION AND RECOGNIZES THERE ARE
AREAS IN WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT TO TALK OF DETENTE
POLICIES.

"ON THE OTHER HAND ONE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT DETENTE
POLICIES HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES IN VARIOUS FIELDS:
EXAMPLES ARE THE LIMITED TEST BAN AGREEMENT, THE
NON-PROLIFERATION AGREEMENT AND SALT I. ALSO FRG
TREATIES WITH THE USSR, POLAND AND THE CSSR AS WELL AS
THE BASIC AGREEMENT WITH THE GDR HAVE ACTUALLY LED TO
LESSENING OF TENSION. UNDER THE TITLE DETENTE POLICIES,
DESPITE THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE CONCEPT, NOTABLE
SUCCESSES IN THE SENSE OF A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF
CONFRONTATION HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED."

5. SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT DECLARED THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S
DETENTE EXPLANATION HAS STRENGTHENED THE STRUGGLE FOR

PEACE SINCE THE PRESIDENT ASSURED THAT THE U.S. WILL
CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR A DECREASE IN TENSION IN ITS
TALKS BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS. BRANDT ADDED THAT HIS
"OSTPOLITIK" HAD NEVER DOUBTED THE NECESSITY TO BUILD
UP A SECURE BASE IN ORDER TO STRIVE SUCCESSFULLY FOR
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DECREASE IN EAST-WEST TENSIONS. BRANDT WARNED THE
OPPOSITION PARTIES NOT TO TRY TO TURN PRESIDENT FORD'S
STATEMENTS TO THEIR OWN USE: "WHOEVER SEEKS TO OBTAIN
DOMESTIC POLITICAL CAPITAL IS IN DANGER THEREBY OF
BREAKING INTERNATIONAL PORCELAIN."

6. CDU "BUNDESTAG" FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN WERNER
MARX, A CRITIC OF THE GOVERNMENT'S "OSTPOLITIK", NONE-
THELESS MAINTAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DETENTE COMMENT
SIGNIFIES A "SIGN OF A DEFINITE CORRECTION IN AMERICAN
DETENTE HOPES AND WISHES."

7. COMMENT: THE ATTENTION DEVOTED BY THE FRG MEDIA
TO THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT IS ANOTHER IN WHAT PROMISES
TO BE A LONG STRING OF OVERLAPPING DOMESTIC POLITICAL
READINGS BETWEEN NOW AND THE CULMINATION OF THE FRG AND
US NATIONAL ELECTION PROCESS NEXT FALL; THERE ARE BOUND
TO BE ECHOES IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WHENEVER A COMMENT
IS MADE IN THE US THAT CAN BE INTERPRETED TO SERVE
THE PURPOSES OF THE GOVERNMENT OR THE OPPOSITION.
HILLENBRAND

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